

Making gender-specific medicine Mainstream: introducing of Gender Competence to medical education

Ann-Maree Nobelius

¹ Gender Working Party, Centre for Medical and Health Sciences Education, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Monash University

The development of gender-specific medicine as a field is a triumph for evidence based medicine and equity advocacy and a credit to its founders. This conference is a testimony to the power of an idea whose time has come. At the time of the emergence of the debate over gender-specific medicine Monash University was planning a new case-based learning curriculum. We decided to seize the opportunity for innovation by the introducing gender-specific evidence to the new curriculum. But medicine is a culture with deep historical roots and effecting change in the teaching and clinical practice of our educators was not as simple as writing new curriculum and pointing to the evidence. The convention of the use of gender neutral language by academics and clinicians teaching meant that students soon understood their mentors did not see this innovation as relevant. Without the support of our teaching staff, gender competent curriculum would never be taught and role-modelled. Our challenge was to understand the cultural barriers that prevented the uptake of this new evidence. We problematised the use of gender neutral language and gender-blindness using gender-specific evidence produced by researchers like you. A programme of advocacy and staff development has resulted in widespread support for gender mainstreaming and promoted equity and diversity across the Faculty. The outcome has been the introduction of a gender competent medical curriculum. This presentation outlines the process at Monash University and our collaborations with colleagues work worldwide.